GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4041
ANSWERED ON:27.03.2017
Trade Facilitation Agreement of WTO
Charitra Shri Ram;Gopal Dr. K.;Mahendran Shri C.;Manjhi Shri Hari;Ramachandran Shri Krishnan Narayanasamy;Udhayakumar Shri M.

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of World Trade Organization (WTO) along with its ratification status, country-wise including India and the benefits to the country therefrom;
(b) whether the Government has started the process to set up a National committee on Trade Facilitation in the country to coordinate and implement the TFA of WTO and if so, the details and the status thereof;
(c) whether the said TFA is likely to simplify customs regulations for crossborder movements of goods/ lead to reduction in transaction costs/ make it easier for developing countries to trade with developed nations in global markets and also to reduce red-tapism to facilitate trade by reforming customs bureaucracies and formalities and if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether the Government has introduced a concept note at the WTO highlighting the need for a Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in services and if so, the details and the status thereof indicating the recent developments in this regard;
(e) whether India's efforts to garner support for the proposed TFA in Services comes even as it has dragged the United States to the WTO following US's move to hike visa fees for H-1B and L-I categories and if so, the details thereof; and
(f) whether India had also objected to Britain tightening norms for foreign skilled workers and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) to (c): Yes Madam, consequent upon the ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of World Trade Organization (WTO) by India in April, 2016, a National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary has been constituted. The TFA would necessitate simplification of border management procedures and adoption of new transparency measures, all of which are expected to reduce the transaction cost of imports and exports and facilitate smooth movement of goods across borders. As of now 112 members have ratified TFA, including India (list attached).

(d) & (e): India tabled the "Concept Note for an initiative on Trade Facilitation in Services" at the WTO to facilitate discussion among WTO members with an aim to achieve an outcome. India's proposal on Trade Facilitation in Services and the US visa fee hike for H-1B and L-1 categories are different issues and are being taken up separately at the appropriate level.

(f) : Government of India has been consistently taking up the issue of tightening norms for skilled foreign workers with the Government of UK at the highest levels. The UK Government has been urged to not accept the recommendations of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) in the interest of the bilateral trade in services between India and the UK.
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The List of Countries which has ratified TFA
(Total 112 Countries including 28 Member States of European Union)

Sl. No. Country S. No. Country

1 Hong Kong China 46 Macao China,
2 Singapore 47 United Arab Emirates
3 United States 48 Samoa
4 Mauritius 49 India
5 Malaysia 50 Russian Federation
6 Japan 51 Montenegro
7 Australia 52 Albania
8 Botswana 53 Kazakhstan
9 Trinidad and Tobago 54 Sri Lanka
10 Republic of Korea 55 St. Kitts and Nevis
11 Nicaragua 56 Madagascar
12 Niger 57 Republic of Moldova
13 Belize 58 El Salvador
14 Switzerland 59 Honduras
15 Chinese Taipei 60 Mexico
16 China 61 Peru
17 Liechtenstein 62 Saudi Arabia

18 Lao PDR 63 Afghanistan
19 New Zealand 64 Senegal
20 Togo 65 Uruguay
21 Thailand 66 Bahrain
22 European Union (on behalf of its 28 member states) 67 Bangladesh
23 Republic of Macedonia 68 Philippines
24 Pakistan 69 Iceland
25 Panama 70 Chile
26 Guyana 71 Swaziland
27 CÃ´te d'Ivoire 72 Dominica
28 Grenada 73 Mongolia
29 Saint Lucia 74 Gabon
30 Kenya 75 Kyrgyz Republic
31 Myanmar 76 Canada
32 Norway 77 Ghana
33 Viet Nam 78 Mozambique
34 Brunei 79 Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
35 Zambia 80 Nigeria.
36 Ukraine 81 Nepal
37 Lesotho 82 Rwanda
38 Georgia 83 Oman
39 Seychelles 84 Chad
40 Jamaica 85 Jordan
41 Mali
42 Cambodia
43 Paraguay
44 Turkey
45 Brazil